1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

donkey for the next mile or two. The pigs travel relatively well because they have not been confined and fed in sties all their lives, but have been grazed in the open around the Monguor villages. The same men who buy pigs also buy hog bristles, in which there used to be a large trade. The bristles were sent all the way to Tientsin on the coast of North China and shipped from there to Europe and America for making brushes.

The wool and skin merchants of Hsining also send their buyers into the Monguor country. All of this buying is done directly in the homes of families that have small amounts to sell, with the result that Monguor children, girls as well as boys, grow up fully acquainted with the fluctuation of market prices and the long-drawn-out processes of bargaining. Much of the buying in small quantities is done by the peddlars, especially Muslims. They deal largely in things needed by women, such as needles, colored thread, cotton cloth, cheap jewelry, pepper, and sugar and other condiments, and for the men tobacco and pipes. These things are usually not sold for cash but bartered for eggs and small quantities of grain, wool, or skins. It is customary for Monguor families to provide such peddlars with a place to sleep over night, in return for a small present made to the women of the family; and as most of the bargaining is done by the women, the peddlars are the "radio" of the country, spreading news and interesting gossip as they travel.

Buying and selling are done on a larger scale at fairs. Two or three times a year every important monastery holds special religious performances, around which there spring up markets and fairs. Chinese merchants, after paying a fee to the monastery or the T'u-ssu, pitch their tents and display their merchandise. The fair spreads all over the valley around the monastery. Spades and plows and all kinds of farm implements are for sale, in addition to cotton cloth, satin and silk, jewelry, dishes and crockery, cooking kettles, spices, tobacco and pipes, wine, fruit, saddles and saddle rugs. Chinese quack doctors sell their medicines and profess to diagnose diseases. To these fairs the Monguors bring their horses, cows, sheep, and pigs for sale.

Some of these fairs are especially celebrated and attract Monguors and Tibetans from considerable distances. In the afternoons there are horse races and wrestling matches, singing and dancing and merrymaking, and often, when there has been too much drinking, fights between clans and villages.

A special activity of young Monguor men is the long-distance caravan trade with Tibet, reminiscent of the medieval overland trade in Europe between Italy, France, Germany, and the Low Countries. The big men of the caravan trade going into the interior of Tibet and as far as Lhasa are Chinese merchants. Small merchants, with perhaps only a load or two of goods, attach themselves to these caravans and so do Tibetan lamas and lamas from the Monguor country and from

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

old Living Buddha of Erh-ku-lung. Each claimed to be the proprietor of a small mountain. The Living Buddha lost his suit and the limping Tjaar tseen became the most celebrated man in the country. The Buddha invited three black shamans to bewitch the limping Tjaar tseen, and accused him again. He lost the second lawsuit also. Raging, the Buddha invited three black shamans to cast more efficacious spells. The chief of the village did not care any more, and the villagers graze their herds on the mountain to the present day. This fact is interesting for us because a Living Buddha, on two occasions, invited black shamans.

Hu, a rich Monguor, compelled a poor Monguor to sell to him his beautiful and willing young wife. The poor Monguor, using his last resource, invited a black shaman to bewitch his wife. The black shaman prepared skulls of a dog and of a fox, and a horn of a black goat. Inside each he enclosed three slips of paper on which he had designed cabalistic signs with dog blood around the name of the wife. The three items were buried at night under the entrance door of the courtyard of Hu, with the mouth of the skulls facing his living room. The young wife became sick. Shamans were invited to discover the cause of the illness and to neutralize the evil influences, but to no avail. The wife died and the shaman, it was said, was powerless against a punishment of Heaven and the spirits. But there was no peace in the courtyard; at night, noises disturbed the rest. Black shamans were invited for three days and they found the skulls. The poor man was accused before the T'u-ssu, but the T'u-ssu did not pay any attention because the behavior of the rich Monguor was supposed to have been unjust. It is the usual trick of the black shamans to bury magical things under the lintels of doors or in cemeteries.

In countries where there are no newspapers, such tales are spread like prairie fires, by peddlers, and commented on and believed, especially when outstanding persons are involved. They create the trend of mind of the people and make them fear so much the black shamans living south of the Hsining River, who are said to use beads made from human bones, to blow a trumpet made from the bone of a young woman who committed suicide, to wear a girdle made from the skin of such a woman, to braid into the enormous pigtail, coiled around the head, the hair of such a woman, and to use drums made from skulls of young girls. The most terrifying tales are told about them and they are believed by the people.

RITES CONCERNING THE GUARDIAN SPIRITS OF THE WEALTH OF THE FAMILY

According to the Monguors, persons who commit injustices are pursued by the guardian spirit of the wealth of the victim of the injustice, who causes them

/The Monguors/

N *563 M 562 852 [553] first son is an occasion for great rejoicing. Various rituals are performed in connection with the name-giving, and the announcement of the birth to the grandparents on both sides. Everyone in the village is invited to a party, and relatives and friends bring gifts for the baby.

M [203] [604] [603] [553] The birth of daughters and younger sons requires less elaborate celebration. Invitations are sent to the child's maternal uncles to be present at the name-giving ceremony, which is performed by the grandfather. It is thought that a woman's brothers have a powerful influence over the family into which her child is born, and therefore they must be notified properly.

M [184] Poor families also celebrate the birth of the first son, although the ceremonies are less elaborate. If the family cannot afford the expense of a feast, rich people of the village often help them. It is not right to allow the birth of a first son to go uncelebrated, for he is the new link in the ancestral chain, and it is he who will grow up to make the sacrifices to the clan ancestor, an important concern to the Mongours.

N *563 M 302 [593] [888] j. Beard-growing

A man may start to grow a beard on the first day of the first or second moon of the new year after his thirtieth birthday, but only if his parents are dead. He must not grow a beard while his parents are alive, as it would remind his parents of their advanced age and approaching death.

N *563 M 764 [171] [179] k. Wedding, funeral and grave

The customs surrounding weddings, funerals and the construction of graves are almost the same among the Mongours as those practiced in traditional China. Their burial, however, is unique. Under the influence of Lama Buddhism, it has become the general custom of the Mongours to cremate their dead. The funeral rites are carried out by lamas. In the olden days, however, the T'u-ssu and the nobles were always buried.

N *563 M 843 562 4. Popular beliefs

Because of the importance of having a son, the pregnant woman is full of hopeful expectation. Everyone in the village knows about the coming event, and is interested in the sex of the child. It is believed that a male child lies on the left side of the womb, a female child on the right. The pregnant woman is watched carefully when she enters a doorway. If she steps over the threshold with her right foot, she is thought to be carrying a boy; if with her left foot, a girl. The logic behind this notion is that a boy makes the left side heavier than the right, so the mother will instinctively raise her right foot to make a step upward.

N *563 M 553 [99] 789 If several children in a family have died in infancy, the head of a family blessed with many children will be invited to name a newborn child, in the hope that some of his good luck may pass on the luckless family.